

AQUACULTURE WITHOUT FRONTIERS: HELPING DEVELOP “RESTRUCTURED” FISH PRODUCTS IN MEXICO



Newly appointed UTMarT Rector, Dr. Antonio Garza de Yta, has created a buzz, which you can feel with both the staff and students and extends to the local industry and community. With assistance of the State Government, UTMarT is working with the local fishermen and their cooperative organisers in offering specific education opportunities to the children of the fishermen, helping to bridge communication between all parties.

One of the programs starting to take shape because of these new liaisons is the Restructured Fish program, which creates new products for the market from underutilized species and “waste fish.” This is employing local women while helping to feed schoolchildren. Everyone sees this as a win-win arrangement, which solves many problems. Unwanted or waste fish are a major issue in many countries so this approach is something that could be transferred to any country.

Many assorted products were designed using the skills and imagination of the talented staff and students at UTMarT. After trialing, products were locked in with recipe and manufacturing instructions. Women from the community were then trained to prepare the products, which are used to feed schoolchildren in the area.

The State Government assisted with the funding and even got engaged in taste testing during product development. Young people at schools will benefit from the out-

In Mexico, Aquaculture without Frontiers (AwF) has developed a Memorandum of Understanding with the new Universidad Tecnológica del Mar de Tamaulipas (UTMarT) based in La Pesca, Soto La Marina in the state of Tamaulipas.



comes of the program as they are now enjoying nutritious fish as part of their weekly diet and everyone sees this as a breakthrough where government, higher education, industry and the community is involved in diverse ways in solving a significant issue and creating a great outcome.

In various parts of the world many species of fish are discarded because they are not popular and much fish is wasted through poor processing or infrastructure so the program highlights what can be done if people work together.

The next phase is to work with the community and local conserva-

tion groups in improving the mangroves in the area. The initial plan is to create a mangrove restoration centre, which will encourage students and members of the community to work together. UTMarT staff will build study programs around mangroves and will, with AwF, reach out to other groups around the world.

Mangroves provide ecosystem services to coastal communities across 123 tropical and subtropical countries and support fisheries through nursery habitat provision, refugia and nutrient out-welling. The lack of large-scale data on mangroves means the importance of mangrove-fishery



linkages is not understood in a global context as well as it should be.

We do know that mangroves are disappearing globally at an alarming rate so there is a need to build some global understanding to:

- Understand current mangrove-fishery linkages and determine which attributes related to the presence of mangroves are important to fisheries.

- Determine whether global and regional catch data suggests a link between mangrove presence and fisheries productivity.

- Relate resulting conclusions to many fine-scale local case studies which investigate the link between mangrove attributes to local artisanal fisheries and community livelihoods.

- Estimate the potential impacts of global change (including mangrove

loss by climate related and anthropogenic impacts) over a range of spatial scales on artisanal fisheries and, subsequently, the communities dependent on them.

Environmental issues such as these are typically far away from the minds of people who are struggling to obtain food to survive or who are trading products globally. There clearly needs to be more education and engagement in understanding the consequences; if we are not getting those important messages through to the industry, then it will be even harder to get them through to the public.

UTMarT is working with the Tamaulipas State government and the various Mexican national government authorities to organize a Rural Aquaculture Conference where discussions on subjects like these can take place and practical workshops can be arranged. AwF will be engaged in this effort, and welcomes inputs from interested parties. 



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